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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

867 Such relations and norms governing the relationship between the family members reflect and imply certain ways of behavior which the child imbibes within the family circle. They also reflect some of the necessary requirements for the harmonious functioning of the various social units. The family in Silwa is one of the fields of teaching, and here more perhaps of learning, some of the standardized social relations and their moral significance.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN ACTION

602 Here some of the functions of the social structure have been examined. It is doubtless true that structural norms provide the articulating force in the village society, acting as traffic lights for individual behaviour. They define personal and corporate rights and duties with individuals, families and clans; indicate the extent of emotional involvement, which is expected to be very strong with close relatives, and joint family, fading somewhat in intensity as the kin spreads in the clan. They also specify the kind of relationship with the patrilineal and the matrilineal sides. Differentiation in kinship relations carries with it differentiation of behaviour, rights and obligations, and affective attachments.

Moreover, the individual faces each of life's rejoicings or crises not only by himself but with the support and co-operation of all those related to him either by patrilineal ('asaba), matrilineal (lahma) and in-law (nasab) relationship, or any other intimate ties. The extent and frequency of such a support, and the hierarchical unit that undertakes the help, varies according to the situation envisaged, to the number of close relatives, and to the prestige of the person.

In sickness, for instance, it is worth noting how kinsmen and kinswomen flock to visit a sick person, talk to him, attempt to alleviate his pain, pray for his safety, and give advice and medicine.

602 539 There is a popular song which indicates the amount of security and pride that a sick man derives from being surrounded by his family and people. The song imagines a conversation between a doctor and a sick person, where the doctor asks who is going to pay for the medicine. The sick person is shocked by such a question and instantly replies that he has so many people who will see to it. The song goes on to show how each member of the family offers the doctor something in turn. But in the end the patient dies, because he is so aggravated and embittered by the doctor's question, which implied that he had no people to attend him in such a matter as paying the doctor's fees and medicine charges. 'To have no [518] people' is one of the greatest insults that could be directed to any person. The song goes:

A sick person asked the doctor to treat him.
The doctor agreed, but enquired as to who was responsible for paying the expenses of treatment.
[533] The sick person replied: 'O doctor, don't think that I am without support.

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I have a thousand people besides my paternal and maternal uncles.'
When the patient's mother heard the conversation, she offered the doctor her necklace and bracelets.
When the father heard about this, he offered his land and property.
When the sister heard about this, she offered her anklets and earrings.
When his people (i.e. joint family) heard about this, they said 'We shall all pay it with no fuss or difficulty'.

This support shows itself not only when the relatives and friends go to visit the sick person in the village, irrespective as to whether the disease is infectious or not, but also when they visit him in hospital in town. If the person recovers from a serious illness, or comes back home after being away for some time, the people go to congratulate him for his recovery or for his return home by saying 'Let us thank God for your safety'.

To take another example, if a cow or a camel has been seriously injured in an accident, it is killed, and the owner's relatives, neighbours, and friends are morally compelled to buy a portion of the meat to part-compensate for the loss. If a person's animal dies he is consoled by others with the invocation 'May God compensate you'.

Death is another major event in which the family finds itself supported by condolences and sympathies of kinsfolk. If the deceased belongs to the category of youngsters, condolence is compulsory on the clan and intimate friends only. If he belongs to the second and third categories of age groups (unmarried or adults) the whole village has to condole with the sufferers. In death, more than in any other event, kinship ties are the most important factor in deciding one's social obligations. It is incumbent on the close relatives both paternal and maternal, as well as in-laws, to stay away from work and remain in the guest house for ten or fifteen days, and frequently sleep there, or in the case of women, in the house of the deceased relative. Close relatives have to assist in conveying the funeral bier to the cemetery, to mourn the deceased more than others, and to send food to the guest house and to the house of the deceased, normally an obligation more upon the clan house-heads and the close maternal relatives than upon any others.

The same solidarities and mutual family and clan obligations manifest themselves on occasions of rejoicing such as birth, circumcision and weddings, by sending gifts, food, by helping in the preparation of the ceremony, or at least by merely attending in the case of men or sending out a joy-cry in the case of women.

Moreover, the social structure functions also as a means of mediation in the sectional frictions that are bound to arise. In the following example, which the writer witnessed, the head members of a clan mediated between

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knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'.

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

'Who supports his father
except him who descends from his loins.
May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
and your mouth for an answer.'

For a girl they sing only one line:

'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her.

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him.

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

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palm tree that extends from here to the island' (Al nakhla attawili, min hina lil jaziri).

7. One of their favourite games is for two boys to stand side by side linking the near hands, and for a third boy to crook a leg over the joined arms and place his hand on the near shoulder of each of the other two boys. As they advance at walking pace, he hops on his one leg, then sings 'The lame cock jumps over the hen' (Arag arroug, nat al faroug), as they quicken their pace. Races can be run in this way, having teams of three.

From the age of nine and ten till thirteen and fourteen years boys play more complicated games which are, on the whole, tougher and require more muscular skill, lasting longer.

8. For instance, a boy stands facing a wall, leaning forward with his palms flat to support him, his legs apart. Another stands behind him grasping him round the waist, another stands behind this latter grasping him similarly, and so forth for as many as are playing. The last one, however, is the active player in the game. His task is to detach each member, one by one, from the chain. This he must do by grasping the last member by both legs and pulling him how he will until he has detached the person in question, dragging him away to a base. Then he returns to tackle the next victim and so on. When he has finished this, another member is dragged till the chain, thus disconnected, is reformed to start again.

9. The game of 'Drag him, bring him along' is an interesting game for this age group. The boys are divided into two teams of equal numbers, and face each other on either side of a line drawn on the ground. Each boy grasps his opposite number by the right hand, across the line. The aim is to pull the opponent over the line of demarcation towards one's own side. Directly one member has done this, two boys, one from each side, are chosen to spit on the sand, and the loser, bending over with his hands on the ground, is slapped on the buttocks by all members of the other side. This continues until the two boys declare that the spit has gone dry. If, however, the victim wishes to curtail his punishment he must say 'I am a woman', whereupon the beating ceases, and the teams line up again and resume the struggle. A confession of 'womanhood' by a boy of one side is a point scored for the other.

10. There are also various versions of hide-and-seek. The well-known type is where one hides and the rest search him out while singing in chorus:

At-talab fat fat
The fox passed, passed
wif-dailo saba laffat
and in his tail there are seven knots.

A variation of this is called 'Policemen and thieves' with two teams, where each member of one team (the constables) must search out his opposite number in the other team (the thieves). Having found him, the searcher

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must bring him to the base, often a task which entails struggle and strategy. After all the thieves have been rounded up, the teams change places, and the game goes on.

11. On moonlit nights the following game called 'Who jumped over thee, O little pot?' (Meennattak y kwaidees) is played with great zest. Two boys are chosen by turns, one to bend over on to all fours placing his head between the knees of the other facing him. The former's eyes are covered by the latter's hands, so that he cannot see. The other boys jump in turn over the crouching boy, who at each jump is asked by his partner by saying 'Who jumped over thee, O little pot?' If he guesses correctly, he can immediately change places with the jumper. If, however, he does not guess any of the names, the boys disperse after secretly informing the partner where they will hide, and the crouching boy must then guess where each one has hidden. A correct guess will merely bring back the boy whose place was correctly guessed from his hiding place, but inability to guess will mean that the hiding boy must be carried back to base.

12. 'The hidden heaps' (Kwaimat ad-das) is also a game played preferably on a moonlit night, with as many boys as possible joining in, as it is, *par excellence*, a game of the crowd. Two senior boys are chosen as leaders and the other boys pair up. The pairs decide on names beyond the leaders' hearing; one is wheat, the other barley, one is horse, the other donkey, and so on. They return to the leaders who alternately are given two such agreed names to choose from, and thus the two teams are formed. The leaders and their teams then set off in opposite directions, each team agreeing on the limits of an area to be covered. The aim is to make little heaps of sand or earth in out-of-the-way places, so unobtrusive that some effort must be made to discover them. The first team to return begins to make a noise, shouting, howling or calling, so that the other team shall return. Then both teams set off into the other's territory, to destroy as many of the heaps as they can find. On their way they sing:

Sharrag, gharrab, ya liamoon,
In the east, in the west, there are lemons,
Bahhar, ghabbal, ya liamoon.
In the north, in the south, there are lemons.

Then at last both teams meet again, and there is a check by each leader of the other team's work. This necessitates visits afterwards to both areas by both teams, and the heaps still left undestroyed on both sides are totalled up, the winning team having a balance of undestroyed heaps in their favour.

13. 'The little rope' (Hibail) is played with two boys seated on the ground facing each other, holding a rope tautly between them. One is called the 'Bridegroom', the other the 'Bride'. The other boys take turns to approach the 'bridegroom' and strike him with a small rope or a turban end. Then, and not before, the 'bridegroom' drops his rope and makes every

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882 men. One woman told me that a girl who beautifies herself will find
831 difficulty in marriage and will have no 'lamah' (halo) about her to please
[834] her husband when married.

During adolescence, however, the girl would be prepared for marriage
882 by tattooing her lower lip and by a special mode of hair style, distinguish-
304 able from the loose hanging hair of childhood. For tattooing the lip, a
[301] special woman is invited to prick the lip with a pack of needles smeared in black soot mixed with animal bile. The hair dressing of an adolescent girl and a woman is very much like that among the Sudanese women.[1] A special woman called 'mashata' plaits the hair into small tresses tightly covering the head. This style of hair makes a firm basis for fixing her
[301] ornaments on marriage, which are usually composed of three golden disks (dinar, pl. dananeer) that dangle over the forehead, and a silver chain connected to the ends of the hair at the back.

883 It is during adolescence also that boys show the greatest interest in
539 singing, and for this purpose they form the so-called 'circle of romance
● 533 boys' (awlad al hawa). In these circles, held usually in summer, on festive occasions, weddings and circumcision, youths give vent to their new interest in love. They perform by standing in a circle with one taking the lead by singing a song while the other boys listen. On finishing, they repeat in chorus the last line again and again, clapping their hands rhythmically till the first singer or another youth starts another song. Some of these songs are composed extemporaneously, while others are old ones repeated. The following three examples are typical of the songs sung:

Ya bit ya um ghawaish,
khallaiti 'agli taish,
nassaitini al ma'aish,
Chorus: Wi dmoui 'al'ashik 'al khaddain.

O thou girl with bracelets,
thou hast rendered my mind crazy,
and hast made me neglect my work.
Chorus: And the tears of the lover are on the cheeks.

. . . . .

Rakbah min foag wasil,
tihki bil hasil,
mafeesh adab wasil.
Chorus: 'Ala annabi wahhid wi salli.

She is on the top (on the roof),
telling what has happened,
she has no politeness at all.
Chorus: Say God is one and pray for the Prophet.

[1] Cf. Sophie Zenovsky, 'Marriage Customs in Omdurman', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, Part ii, 1945, p. 244.

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Wana jayi mna al Mas'aeed,
wi labis talat jalalaleeb,
wi batgallab baihin gilleeb.
Chorus: Gol la abouy in kunt tahwani, gol la abouy.

I was coming from al Masaeed (a neighbouring village)
wearing three garments
in which I was rolling, rolling.
Chorus: Tell my father if you love me, tell my father.

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At this stage of adolescence, boys—especially those who have been to the Kuttab—begin to participate in mosque prayers and show intensified interest in religious practices. They go to Friday prayers, take part in the calling for prayers and the drawing of water from the mosque well for ablutions. A great number of youths also join the mystic order of 'Nakshabandia'; they are called 'Boys of the Path' (awlad attarik), and their headquarters is a room attached to the old mosque of the village. Members of the sect are expected to attend the night prayers ('isha) in the mosque, after which they congregate for reading and listening to mystic verses, followed by telling some of God's attributes silently several times. This is called 'the mystic routine' (ratib). Moreover, on certain occasions, these youths perform collectively the 'Zikr'. The performance of this mystic ritual involves mainly the repetitive uttering of some of God's attributes aloud and in unison. The leader of the 'Zikr', a blind man, stands in the middle of a circle, while youths, and sometimes with them a few married men, will be standing in a circle calling out together one of God's names, e.g. 'Merciful' (Raheem), while swaying their bodies. This repetition may go on for about a quarter of an hour or so, to be stopped by the leader who will recite some verses of saints or some 'mawwals'. While the boys are listening to this, they express their approval and admiration, and they may ask for another 'mawwal' from the reciter before they start chanting another of God's names. While those in the circle are repeatedly chanting a name of God, gradually getting into almost a state of ecstasy, the leader in the centre would be clapping his hands and stimulating his boys to carry on by more repetitive chanting. The following are two examples of 'mawwals' sung on such occasions:

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'Ajaby 'ala welaid fi zikr al-Ilah zawwad,
elif al-Jalalah, wib salaat annabi t'awwad.
'Ash gadr ma'ash la mal wa la hawwad,
wa la umru jalas yoam ma'ally galbahum sawwad,
lamma mat bayyan karamat la 'affan wa la dawwad.

I admire the boy who has indulged in mentioning God's name,
and accustomed himself to His Glorious name and to prayers for the Prophet,

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and lived all his time never deviating from the right path,
and never associating with those people whose hearts have been blackened.
When he died he showed signs of piety, and his body neither decayed, nor was attacked by worms.

Shams al giyama danat gum ya mureed safir,
gum jahhiz azzad min gabl al-miaad safir,
wi gabbad al-arwah daiman al-'ibad safir,
as-shaib wiyya as-sigam ju lak ya fata mursal.
wi likul umnah ata liha nabi mursal,
ata Jibril bil burag li annabi mursal.

The sun of resurrection is approaching, a warning for departure.
Prepare yourself before the hour comes.
The seizer of souls is always apparent and about.
Grey hairs and sickness are messengers for you.
For every nation there has been a messenger,
and Gabriel delivered God's message to Muhammad.

On some occasions these 'Boys of the Path' go to visit their 'brothers' in another village. On their approaching that village, the heralding of which would be by the visitors' chanting in unison popular verses and by beating on a small drum, the latter would walk out to receive them before they enter the village. They would offer them tea and dates and spend the rest of the night reciting verses or holding a 'zikr'.

Some of the adolescents and youths in the village do not take part in either the singing or mystic activities, for they are not encouraged to do so by their parents, and they are satisfied by only gathering in the neighbourhood for chatting. On asking some of these boys why they did not join in such activities, they replied that they wanted to attend to their livelihood, and as they usually felt tired through the day's work they could spare no time or effort for such activities.

It must be pointed out that it is not maintained here that interest in religious matters is a psychological consequence of puberty and adolescence, or that the attitude towards sex is being learnt only at this stage. Such norms as mentioned earlier are being imbibed gradually from childhood. With regard to religious matters, children start by learning about God's power at an early stage, even in their play and riddles. On going to the Kuttab they know how to recite the major Islamic creed, 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet', learn the obligation of fasting through the adult practice and through their own attempts to fast half a day, a day or more according to their capacity in imitation of adults. As far as sex norms are concerned, they begin to express themselves in separate play as early as the age of eight and nine years. But with the dawning of adolescence, the child finds himself awakened to the cumulative

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The boy's family bought an outfit for the girl (composed of two black [584]
outer garments (tobs) and two colourful patterned gallabiahs. Together [291]
with the girl's outfit, a tob and a gallabiah were bought for the mother and a gallabiah for each of the bride's younger brothers.

Two days before the actual night of marriage, the bridegroom and some of his male relatives and friends who were unmarried went around distributing invitations to those the family wished to invite. Those invited would be expected to contribute during the forthcoming ceremony of 'haircutting' as in case of circumcision ceremonies.

The appointed day arrived, and began with the female celebration in [585]
the bridegroom's house. Women came with corn on their trays as their [431]
contribution to the mother who, in return, placed on the tray a loaf of wheat bread or a part of it and a piece of meat according to the contribution received.[1] During this exchange of gifts which took place between the late morning and the late afternoon, the boy's house looked very busy, but with hardly any men about. Women were singing and calling out their joy-cries and exchanging the good wishes.

In the late afternoon the girl invited her friends for the jar-filling ritual. [585]
Accompanied by four other girls the bride took her jar to the Nile, and on this occasion, as is the custom, she was allowed to linger as much as she liked on her journey to the Nile, provided she came back before sunset. [515]
On her arrival home she washed herself completely, was rubbed with henna and perfume by her mother and was wrapped in a woman's cover (twada), her face not being seen by anyone except her very close female relatives, e.g. mother, grandmother, maternal aunt.[2] She was then surrounded by a group of girls of her age who began entertaining her by playing on the tambourine, and singing the traditional songs of the occasion. The following is an example: [533]

> How pretty is the one we are entertaining,
> How we are admiring her.
> The snake in his hole
> has spent a sleepless night.
> He kept one eye on her forehead,
> and the other on her anklets.[3]

In the bridegroom's house there was the preparation for the procession round the village to take place before the evening prayer. The procession was led by some religious men beating on their drums and tambourines while chanting hymns of praise to the Prophet. On the way, and on arriving at the mosque, dates and sweets were distributed and children usually find such occasions most exciting when they scramble for their booty.

[1] It was here that the boy's paternal uncle's wife and some of her friends had a row with the boy's mother over what they ought to have received for their contribution. [5718]

[2] Even the father himself is not supposed to see her face.

[3] The snake is presumably the symbol of the husband, who has been admiring the girl from top to toe.

[See category 116, p. 193 -- Aug 1951]

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they can hardly be dignified by the name of streets—progress along which is often impeded, sometimes almost entirely blocked, by piles of refuse and mud. In some of the larger villages there may be one or two broader streets, forming the chief thoroughfares (Fig. 8). At the side of one of the narrow lanes there may be an open space in which palm-trees grow (Fig. 9), and here the village weaver often arranges the warp for his cloth, the threads being attached to the trunks of two of the trees (Fig. 10). When this process is completed the warp is taken indoors and attached to the

FIG. 8. A VILLAGE STREET

loom, which usually stands in a somewhat dark room, with mud-coloured walls, and so small in size that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory photograph.

Itinerant vendors ply their trades up and down these tortuous village lanes, uttering their characteristic cries. For example, the onion-seller advertises his wares by calling out, " Oh, onion, sweet as honey ! " The cries are usually intoned in a minor key, sounding to the uninitiated more like a plaintive chant than the proclamation of goods for sale. Another hawker may trade in coloured cotton cloths, printed with various designs to suit all tastes. He usually conveys his goods about on a small hand-cart. From such humble beginnings more than one fortune has been made, for the peasants are fond of hoarding their money, their daily living costing them but little. In time the small sums thus

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the horse, he is paraded through the village, accompanied by musicians. If two brothers are to have this operation at the same time they ride together on one horse. When the perambulation of the village is over the boy is taken home, and all the friends who have placed money on his face, and also the barber, are provided with supper. Music plays an important part at this ceremony, and the musicians keep up a constant beating of drums, clashing of cymbals, and blowing of bagpipes. When the guests have finished supper they all, including the musicians, take their departure. On the following morning the barber only comes to the house and is first paid by the parents, who give him anything from one or two pounds upward. The child is then taken hold of and told not to be afraid. Some one tries to attract his attention, while the barber seizes this opportunity to cut off the foreskin. The boy wears a white *gallabīyeh* for this occasion, with long sleeves, in one of which the foreskin is tied up. The barber then ties the boy's mother and maternal aunt together by binding a turban round their throats, and drags them outside the door of the house. Friends, who by this time have collected outside, come into the house and present the barber with more money, and he then takes his departure. The wound is washed every day, and is anointed with some healing powder, which is, I fancy, *ḥenna*. The foreskin remains in the sleeve of the boy's *gallabīyeh* until the wound is healed, during which period the white gown must also be worn.

FIG. 40. CAP WORN BY A BOY AT HIS CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY

A charm consisting of short lengths of the mid-rib of a palm-branch, deeply notched along one side, is worn by boys after they have been circumcised to keep the wound from going septic, and to ward off the evil eye. Such a charm is worn for seven days after the operation, being suspended from the neck by a string.

No reason could be given as to why the mother and maternal aunt were tied together by the throat and thrust out of the house.

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approved of the way the women were conducting themselves. They asked me if such things were done in Oxford when there was a death. I said "No," and explained that at such times there was always perfect quiet in a well-conducted household.

"*Aḥsan, aḥsan khāliṣ*" ("Better, much better"), they replied.

Just then a number of women came running out of the house, followed by the dead man's sister. They rushed into a small palm-grove which faced the house and began a weird dance, the sister standing in their midst. The last-mentioned had, on leaving the house, made for a muck-heap which lay near the entrance, and, thrusting her hands into it, covered her face, arms, and clothes with mud, and finally clapped a large lump of it on to the top of her head. As the women went round and round in a circle they chanted a mournful song, violently smiting their cheeks with both hands, in rhythmic accompaniment to the singing.

They soon worked themselves up into a perfect frenzy; the sister fell back two or three times, almost fainting, whereupon the men entreated me to induce her to return to the house. This I at last succeeded in doing, with the assistance of one of the male relations, who were apparently thoroughly ashamed of this wild exhibition of grief. When we had got her safely into the house she sat down on the ground with some of the other women, including the dead man's wife. The latter, by the way, took quite a secondary place in these ceremonies. The blood-tie is the strongest in Egypt, and the wife has to take second place to the sister on such occasions.

The sister now began a long oration in praise of her dead brother, in which the other women joined at intervals, in a kind of chorus. She kept on pointing wildly toward the door of the room in which the dead man lay, while she and her companions uttered cries of "*Yā akhūi, yā akhūi!*" ("O my brother, my brother!").

By this time two or three men were busy washing the corpse and preparing it for burial. Presently one of them came out to fetch the wrappings, which had been placed on the floor of an outer room. These wrappings consisted of white and green cotton cloths, as the relations of the dead man were too poor to afford silk, the white being wound round the body first, the green cloth providing the outer covering, as is also the case with Muslims. After a few minutes the door again opened and the men came out to get the coffin. As they were carrying it into the death-chamber the women became frantic (they had by this time been joined by

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I mounted my donkey and accompanied them. The women went only a short way with us, and we left them, the hysterical sister in their midst, huddled together on the high road which led through the cultivation, still shrieking, smiting their faces, and waving their arms aloft. As we passed on toward the peaceful desert their cries grew fainter and fainter in the distance, till at last no sound broke the stillness save the occasional singing of a hymn by the men who formed the funeral *cortège*.

When we arrived at the gate of the monastery every one passed within the precincts, and the bearers carried the coffin into the church, setting it down in front of the curtain behind which was the altar. We all entered the sacred building, and a seat was offered to me close to the corpse. There was a large assembly of both Copts and Muslims, for the dead man was much respected by the followers of both religions among whom he had lived. We waited and waited, but still there was no sign of a priest. The men beguiled the time by talking and smoking, and, though I am sure it was not at all intentional, there was an extraordinary lack of reverent demeanour in those present. At last the priest arrived. The whole congregation immediately rose to their feet, and after the priest had shaken hands with me the others came forward in turns and kissed his hand. The lid of the coffin was now removed, and the body disclosed, wrapped in its white and green coverings. A very dirty cloth, on which was sewn a cross in green, was placed over the body, and candles were lighted and stuck to the sides of the coffin—six on each side and one each at the head and feet. This was accomplished by dropping some of the melting wax from the lighted candles on to the coffin and sticking the candles on to it. Two larger candles were fitted into large candlesticks placed on either side of the head of the coffin. These candlesticks were possibly of silver, but were in such a dirty state that it was impossible to guess with any certainty of what they were made.

The service then began. It was very long, lasting for three hours or more! The priest was accompanied by the *'arīf*, as the man who leads the singing in a Coptic church is called. The latter was quite blind, and had a very resonant voice. When he sang he accompanied himself on a pair of cymbals. There was a great deal of this 'music,' and also recitations by the priest of portions of the Gospels. Furthermore, another man, whom he singled out from among those present, likewise read passages from the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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COPTS MR 10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning, but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the [illegible] person from the house, where it is believed to remain until the [illegible] day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

drum (*darābukkeh*), etc., while at a short distance the tattooer may be engaged in decorating the hand of some youth.[1]

Various entertainers attend most of the larger markets, such as a conjurer, a reciter of legends, musicians accompanied by a male dancer, to say nothing of the fortune-teller, who, seated in a small tent, usually attracts a considerable number of people. He makes a series of holes in sand spread on a handkerchief upon the ground in front of him, and by certain methods of counting these deducts his conclusions. The conjurers are really very clever.

It will thus be seen that business on market-days is pleasantly combined with pleasure.

Conversation is general and loud, sounding to the unaccustomed European ear like violent quarrelling.

When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths, looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter from the heat. Both time and patience are required to effect a purchase, for the seller of an article asks quite double the price he will accept. Arguing and gesticulating, the trader and would-be purchaser wrangle over the article until the price is adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties. Sometimes, if the trader is insistent, the would-be purchaser gets up from the ground and proceeds to walk away, whereupon the trader usually betrays a readiness to make further concession, and finally agrees to accept a lower price than that demanded.

In the hot season the water-carrier does good business, as heat, bargaining, and shouting make for thirst. He is usually paid not in money, so I was told, but by small presents of onions, tomatoes, or other delicacies.

I have observed that the people show praiseworthy consideration for the animals which they bring to the market. On their arrival one of the first things the men do is to provide their animals with fodder, and also water if such is obtainable. One year, when I was living in the fields near a village, the market was held close to my camp, and I particularly noticed this consideration for their beasts on the part of the peasants.

As the afternoon advances the traders begin to pack up the goods which have remained unpurchased, and those who have come from a distance load their baggage on their donkeys, and so depart to their several villages.

[1] See Chapter III.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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instance, thinks he would like to add to his own property by stealing a portion of his neighbour's he will surreptitiously shift his boundary stones farther on to the adjoining land. This is, of course, quickly detected by the man whose land has been encroached upon, and a bitter dispute will follow, which may end in a violent quarrel.

The plough which is in common use at the present day is a primitive, but quite adequate, machine (Fig. 97). It is made entirely of wood, with the exception of the share, which is tipped with iron. It is generally drawn by oxen, but in Upper Egypt I have seen more than one plough with a camel and a donkey yoked together, a somewhat incongruous pair! The peasant follows on foot, guiding the plough, and usually singing as he works. Except during the inundation the work in the fields is incessant, for, owing to the very fertile soil, one crop can follow another in quick succession.

FIG. 97. A PLOUGH AS USED TO-DAY

The watering of the fields is very strenuous work, the commonest machine used for this purpose being the *shādūf* (see Fig. 13, right, and Fig. 108), a primitive water-hoist. It consists of two upright wooden posts, or pillars, made of mud and *būṣ*, connected by a horizontal bar, across which is slung another bar, or a stout branch of a tree, weighted at one end with mud and stones, while from the other end is suspended a leather or basket-work bucket. The man working the *shādūf* pulls down this bucket into the water (either river or canal), and, when it is full, allows the weighted end to raise it to the level of the land. He then pours the water into a prepared channel, through which it flows in the required direction.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926). 1927
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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other.

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus:

Shawādīf,
Their ropes are of palm-fibre
And their pails are of goatskins.
And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were
invented
By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God?
Loosen the noose!
No mother weeps [for me],
No aunt,
No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blind-folded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.

[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

787 796 152 believed that if a woman gets a sudden fright she is particularly liable to become possessed. For instance, I was told that a woman coming after dark down the stairs which lead from the roof of a house to the ground floor, and carrying no light with her, may become frightened and fall, in which case a sheikh will come into her at once. She will realize what has happened and will ask the sheikh to tell her his name, whereupon he is believed to reply, "I am Sheikh so and so."

A man or woman may be possessed by several sheikhs of both sexes, and persons once possessed remain so till they die. As I have already explained above, a man or woman who is troubled by the sheikh who possesses them will consult a magician, who will inform them what the sheikh requires.

755 787 Sometimes it is necessary to have a ceremony called a *zār*—in fact, most people who are troubled with a sheikh either have such a performance at home or attend one which is being held in another person's house. When a *zār* is being held all the villagers know about it, for they hear the sound of the drum and smell the incense, and all those who are afflicted with this kind of possession will be attracted thither. The sheikhs "make them go," so I was told. Certain songs are sung by the conductor of a *zār* and his [533] assistants. The meaning of the songs has, in some instances, been lost, and some of them may please one sheikh, but not another. Therefore, if a man is possessed by several sheikhs each in turn has to have the songs sung that please him.

One woman I know, after becoming possessed in this way, lost the use of both her legs, which swelled to an unusual size, and if she was moved she cried out with pain. Her brother, seeing her plight, arranged for her to have a *zār*, bringing the conductor and his assistants to his house with their musical instruments—a drum and tambourines. The performance, which was held in an inner room, having begun, the patient suddenly got up and began to dance, and the sheikh spoke through her.

Her brother and the people assembled there asked him what he wanted, to which he replied, "I want nothing."

"Why should you then make her unhappy?" the brother and his friends inquired, "and where do you come from? Are you an Egyptian or a Sudanese?"

He replied, "She was always sitting about and unhappy because her children died, and so I came into her."

So they again asked, "What do you want?"

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

(*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152) in another had collected large and interested audiences. The poet was accompanied in his recitations by a woman—and sometimes by two or three men as well—who beat a single-membrane drum. Peep-shows also contributed to the amusement, the pictures shown usually representing favourite national saints and heroes and heroines. Lastly, roughly made little cars hung on wheels, which turned round and round on a horizontal axis, were much patronized by the children (Fig. 144).

A special sheikh of this district, later to conduct the *zikr* (see

FIG. 144. SWINGS, WHEELS WITH HANGING CARS, AND OTHER AMUSEMENTS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

below) in honour of the sainted Umbārak, paraded through the crowd on a donkey, preceded by three men carrying large banners decorated with various designs and inscriptions, and by musicians playing on cymbals and a double-membrane drum. One of the banners belonged to the sheikh Umbārak, but the others came from the tombs of sheikhs in neighbouring villages. Such banners are always carried in procession on the occasion of a *mūlid*, and the men who bear them advance with dancing steps instead of an ordinary walk.

It should be mentioned here that a *zikr* is a kind of religious dance performed by men and older boys only; the women and girls never take part in it. A detailed description of it is given later on.

In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

796 In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the
769 festival of the sheikh Umbārak was conducted with the utmost good humour, and the behaviour of the crowds was perfect. It came to an end at about seven o'clock.

On the following day the annual *mūlid* of the sheikh Ṣabr was celebrated at his village, which is most picturesquely situated on the bank of the Yūsuf Canal. As I have stated in Chapter XV, this sheikh is much venerated, not only in his own village, but in villages for many miles around. I have been present at his *mūlid* on two or three occasions, and each time large crowds have assembled to do him honour.

The festival begins in the morning at about eleven o'clock, and a number of people joined me as I rode through the fields on my way to the village. Upon these occasions a brisk trade is always carried
[443] on, and piles of brightly coloured sweets are exposed for sale, together with toys, cheap ornaments, dates, and other delicacies. The vendors seat themselves under rough booths, which they erect on the spot, and under which they can take shelter from the fierce rays of the sun.

796 When I arrived a large *zikr* was taking place under the shade
788 of the branches of the sacred tree. It was executed by a number
769 of men forming a circle round the sheikh who conducted this religious exercise. The men swayed rhythmically from side to side, nodded their heads, or bent backward and forward as they pronounced the name of Allāh over and over again. The presiding sheikh beat time by clapping his hands, while now and then a *fiḳīh* would chant passages from the Ḳorān. The ceremony was conducted with great earnestness and solemnity, but some of the performers became so worked up with religious fervour that from time to time they leaped into the air, and finally fell on the ground from exhaustion.

796 Close to where this religious performance was taking place was
769 to be found the usual large wheel, with its hanging seats. Here
[529] the children had congregated, all of them clamouring for a ride, as they are to be seen doing about the whirligigs and swings provided at the fairs in England.

At another spot a poet had collected a large audience, which
[538] listened with evident enjoyment while he gave his recitations to the accompanying beats of two tambourines and a shallow, single-
● [533] membrane drum (*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152).

The banners were much in evidence at this festival, and I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in ancient Egypt, according to the passage in the *Wisdom of Anii* quoted on p. 283, it was not weaned till it was three years old.

On p. 82, in describing the slaughter of a victim at a festival held on behalf of a child, I stated that the animal was placed on its back and its throat cut, and that a quantity of the blood was preserved in a bowl. Victims were slain exactly in this manner at ancient Egyptian festivals. In almost every decorated tombs chapel they are depicted extended on their backs with the butchers cutting their throats. Occasionally in these scenes an assistant is

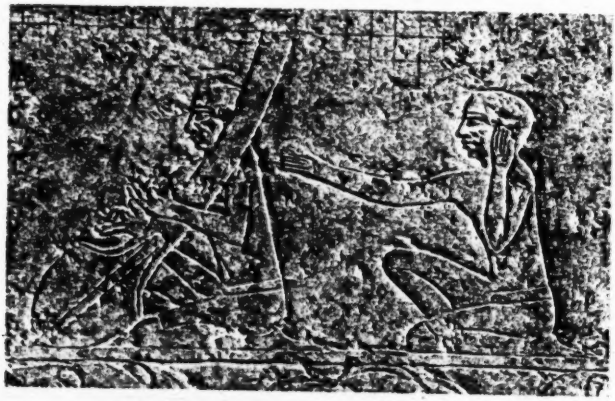

FIG. 160. ANCIENT HARPER AND VOCALIST
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part II, Pl. III.

shown holding a large bowl,[1] evidently to catch the blood (Fig. 159). Did the practice of smearing the door with blood exist in Egypt as far back as the Old Kingdom? The blood was evidently required for some ceremonial purpose, otherwise what need would there have been for the basin?

To sing or recite with one hand laid against a side of the face and the other hand extended (p. 82) is a very ancient practice (Fig. 160), and so, too, is the throwing of one's clothes about as a sign of admiration and rejoicing (p. 83). Thus in one of the *Pyramid Texts*,[2] dating from about 2600 B.C., we read how the dead king, having reached the celestial realm of the sun-god,

[1] A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I (London, 1914), Pl. XI; *cf.* also Part IV (London, 1924), p. 27; P. Montet, *Les scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'ancien empire* (Strassburg, 1925), p. 165.
[2] K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Spruch 518.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Copts MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

"found the gods waiting, wrapped in their garments, their white sandals on their feet. Then cast they their sandals to the ground, then threw they off their garments. 'Our heart was not glad until thou camest,' said they."

The custom of shaving, in performance of a vow, a boy's head save for a number of tufts, which are dedicated to one or more Muslim or Coptic saints, and of ceremonially cutting off the tufts when they have grown to a certain length (pp. 84 ff.), is evidently very ancient. Clay balls containing infantile hair, such as are

FIG. 161. ANCIENT CLAY BALLS FROM EL-'AMARNEH, ONE BROKEN AND SHOWING INFANTILE HAIR INSIDE

described on p. 86, have been found both at el-'Amarneh (Fig. 161) and in a Twentieth-Dynasty tomb at el-Lāhūn.[1] Herodotus[2] seems to be referring to this or some very similar custom when he says:

> All the inhabitants of the cities perform their vows to the keepers [of the sacred animals] in the following manner. Having made a vow to the god to whom the animal belongs, they shave either the whole heads of their children, or a half, or a third of the head, and then weigh the hair in a scale against silver, and whatever the weight may be, they give to the keeper of the animals; and she in return cuts up some fish, and gives it as food to the animals. Such is the usual mode of feeding them.

Circumcision (pp. 87 f.) seems to have been practised universally in ancient times (as it is in modern Egypt) until the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, when it was restricted to candidates for the

[1] W. S. Blackman, *Man*, vol. xxv, pp. 65 ff.
[2] ii, 65.

in the earth, at the water's edge, two stakes about five feet high and a yard apart. When wood is scarce, these two pillars are made of cane or maize stalks daubed over with mud. They are joined at the top by a horizontal bar, like the crossbar of a goalpost. At the middle of this crossbar is balanced a lever more or less straight and about ten feet long. Its shorter arm bears a heavy rock or a great lump of dried mud, and at the end of the longer arm hang two or three yards of rope carrying a bucket, leather basket or old petrol can. This apparatus is placed in the same axis as the channel to be filled. 241 312

The fellah stands on a platform made halfway up the bank and pulls down the balanced pole until the bucket dips into the water and fills itself. A slight upward push, helped by the counterweight, brings it just above the runnel, into which it is emptied. All these movements are slow and rhythmic, sometimes accompanied by a droning chant. Their variety might seem to lessen the effort, and yet the fellah finds this task more gruelling than any other. This is the impression one would gather from the melancholy tone of his chant, and it is confirmed by those who have had the patience to collect the words of such songs ([22]). [533]

By the end of a twelve-hour day two fellaheen working alternately in two- or three-hour shifts may succeed in watering about 1/8 acre of cultivated land. One apparatus of this kind suffices for the cultivation of a feddan. The water may be taken from a well or a pool.

This method is widespread amongst the poor peasantry of the East and Far East, especially the Arabs. But the system originated in Egypt. It may be seen depicted on the oldest bas-reliefs, and nowhere else is it so much in use.

The *shadûf*, as it is called, may be used in combination. In the region of Qena and Dendera, in Upper Egypt, you may still see sets of two, three or four of these apparatus used together or in series, to raise the water from a depth. But when the level is very low the *saqia* is more often used.

The *saqia* is really a machine, though clumsy and primitive. It is made from acacia or sycamore wood and driven not by manpower but by beasts.

The great horizontal wheel, turned anti-clockwise by a harnessed ox or donkey, engages with its rough cogs a vertical

248 this control cotton remains the staple crop of Modern Egypt,
656 It is planted in every *mudiriya* from Behaira to Aswan.

First of all, to avoid intermixture of varieties, which would lower the quality and ruin the reputation of its long-staple cottons, the Ministry of Agriculture takes over the control of all seed from the time of ginning. The fellah buys his seed well in advance from agents of the Royal Agricultural Society, the *Crédit Agricole* or ginning firms. When the
248 field has been prepared by two or three cross-ploughings and divided into furrows, he brings the seed for planting. Then he pushes a few seeds at a time, from six to ten according to the variety, into small holes set about eight inches apart on the southern edge of the furrow and made with a sort of dibble, which also serves as a measuring stick. A fortnight later he visits his seedlings, and near any holes which show no signs of growth he plants more seeds, which he waters by hand. After six weeks the young plants are grown and are even too close. The fellah proceeds to thin out the clusters, leaving in each hole two plants only, and rooting out all the rest. Meanwhile he irrigates the fields, every 15 to 25 days in May and June, and every 12 to 15 days in July. After seeing that every furrow gets its complement of water he uproots the weeds and strips the top bud from each plant, so as to improve the growth of the cotton by preventing the stem from growing too tall. In this way thousands of square miles are not so much farmed as gardened.

248 Like gardening, cotton cultivation demands abundant
461 labour at command. It therefore presupposes, or produces,
464 a dense population, unless machinery makes up the shortage, as in the United States. It is all the easier to obtain the large number of workers required, as the work itself is easy. Women and children here are as good as men, and increase the family's earnings. This fact has contributed largely to the success of cotton in Egypt.

After a brief flowering, which begins in July, the pod bursts open, then the fruit develops and is ready for picking. Twice between the end of August and early October, the whole of the village, divided into gangs under the harrying orders of overseers (*rayess*), sets to work picking the cotton. There
[533] is a recognised chanter of work-songs, to the rhythm of whose music the white tufts of the cotton plant must be deftly stripped off. None must be missed, yet not a single

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.(51)

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give
792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a
842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues
777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A
[765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of
[767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*)
535] specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again(51a).

533 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the
538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac-
[534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

coloured language. More often he will relate the exploits of Abu Zeid el-Hilâli and his companions, and the loneliness of his wife 'Aliya, the prowess of 'Antar, or the pleasures of the flesh. Many of these improbable stories contain a core of historical truth, and recall those to which the peasants listened under the Pharaohs. (11)

The audience listens enraptured, greeting every point with "Allah ! Allah !" or beating time in rhythmic applause to the song. When enthusiasm reaches its peak, caps are torn off and flung into the air. Then the story has to be begun again.

For important occasions such as a wedding, the reception of a public figure, or the eve of a *mûlid*, a band of musicians adds its support.

The players are untrained, their tunes are simple and obvious, and their orchestration is monotonous, if not discordant. They either improvise variations or play some well-known refrain from memory. Their instruments are the *mizmar*, a shrill-toned bagpipe, the *zummara*, a reed flute, single or double, together with the *urghul* and *salamiya*, which are plucked with the fingers. The music is supported by beating either the *tabl*, a large shallow drum, or the *darabukka*, a kind of tambourine made of a piece of donkeyskin stretched over the mouth of an earthen funnel about a foot wide. All these instruments are of local make, and there is nó peasant festivity at which they cannot be heard.

The crowd is even denser when other attractions find a place in the programme. There may be jugglers, performing monkeys, or snake-charmers, or perhaps a sham duel between two fellaheen who swing their staves (*nabbûts*) this way and that in attack and defence.

Belly dances, puppet shows, and pantomimes (*khawwal*) may still sometimes be found.

These entertainments are usually held on the *gurn* and the neighbouring space, or near the Sheikh's tomb on the day of his *mûlid*. They reach the grand scale at those district pilgrimages that annually attract tens of thousands of fellaheen to commemorate, if not to pray to, the holy "patron" on the presumed site of his life and death. There is El-Sayyid El-Bedawi at Tanta, Sidi Abdel Raheem at Qena, Al-Imam Al-Shafei at Old Cairo, and for the Copts Sitti Damiyana, Marie Girgis, and others. (12)

/81 cont'd/

3. The Assistants: 791

Attached to the Kūdiya are her assistants. The central figure among them is her daughter. The assistants cannot be invested until every one of them has made a Zar of her own and thereby passed the ordeal. All wear amulets and all are supposed to be possessed by spirits. They assist by forming the accompaning chorus and by dancing during the Zar-ceremony. They also form a special musical band. [787] [533] [535]

4. The musical band (1): 755 787 533 534

There are many different kinds of musical bands which find use in Zar. They can be classified as follows:

(a) the special band of the Kūdiya: It consists of women who use drums and frame drums (duff) and play in the Kūdiya's house once or twice weekly.

(b) Abu-el-Leel: This band consists of men. There is a flute-player (nāy), a drummer on a frame-drum with jingling disks and rings, other drummers and a dancer with long hair who also uses brass clappers or castanets. (2) (Saggat). He is the central figure of the band and the Zar-ceremony. He dances gracefully, turning his head with the rhythm of the music and accentuating his movements by sounding the castanets between his fingers. He directs the women by gestures and glances to dance in a circle and does not allow them to leave it until they are completely exhausted. [535]

(c) El-Tambura: This is the most important band; its members are all Sudanese and consist of the following persons:

(i) The Songok: he is the central figure of the band and plays the tambura (3); it is an instrument like the Grecian lyra [171]

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(1) For a description of the special musical instruments used in Zar see Curt Sachs; "The History of Musical Instruments" New York 1940, pp. 244-259. The European name is quoted first, the Arabic one given in brackets.

(2) Ibid, p. 103 and p. 455.

(3) In Egypt this instrument is called "Tambura", in Sudan and East Africa "Rababa"; it is actually a lyra. The "Rababa" is another Arabic instrument, see C. Sachs, Ibid, p. 255, 246, 253.

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[171]
[292]

/81 cont'd/

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer. [535]

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ...., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

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These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's body, heart and brain. [755] [782]

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

/85 cont'd/ 755
will then be divided between the Kūdiya, the members of the musical 782
band and the guests. After the patient has eaten the bread, the Kūdiya wraps the silver piece with blood on it, a piece of bread, salt, sugar and Bukhur into a white handkerchief and ties it round the patient's right upper arm. It must stay there for a week. This is called "El-'Aqd", which means pact or treaty, as explained above and signifies that the patient has executed her obligations towards the spirits who must, in turn, refrain from harming her.

/86/ In the evening the Kūdiya, members of the musical band and all guests will partake of the meat of the sacrificed animal. The bones are gathered carefully and buried in the earth.

About 9 P.M. the Kūdiya burns bukhur and fumigates the pa- 755
tient's face, armpits, legs and clothes. Any other woman of the assembly can also be fumigated by the Kūdiya for money. While fumigating the Kūdiya recites something, thereby calling the spirit for whose benefit the Zar is performed, and requests the guest to recite the "opening of the Quoran." She will ask the spirits pardon and request them not to harm the patient's body, heart and head. (14)

Then the patient wears special clothes as required by her master 755
(the spirit in possession of her), when she enters the hall the music 786
tunes in slow rhythm, controlled by the beats of drums and big frame 533
drums. Then the dancer of the band begins his task. He dances in 535
front of the patient and by his glances and movements of body and eyes charms her until she stands up and dances too. He never lets her escape from his magical or magnetical control, lets the dance get more and more frenzied and makes her imitate him. In the same way the music becomes faster, the drums louder and the flutes higher until a barbaric primitive ecstasy dominates the gathering. The dancer looks round for victims who fall an easy prey to his power. He is helped in his endeavours by drummers and frame-drummers

(14) For full details of the recitations see "Folklore" in Arabic by A.R. Saleh. Cairo/2nd edition, 1955, p. 120

/86 cont'd/ 755 786 533 535

who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and eventually falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later. [198]

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed. 755 782

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called "Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to denote evil spirits. 755 776 [192]

   Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only later in history brought about some changes. These gods became minor deities or nature spirits, while their former place was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that [171]

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114 really sung by the people. I was able to prove this in many cases by casually questioning others. It is certain that the majority of these songs did not originate in our day. Some of them can be proven to have been sung just as they are, fifty or sixty years ago.

533 The life of the Egyptian peasant (singular: fellāḥ, plural: fellāḥín), made up of hard work and few pleasures, is more monotonous than that of most peoples. Any great wealth in the material is, therefore, hardly to be expected; and besides this, my collection is small. Nevertheless, it touches all the essential aspects of peasant life. We find children at play and with their mother; lads at the work of excavation; girls drawing water; men at the plow, shāduf and sā'ye (sāqye); the sailor and the vegetable-vender; the watchman guarding the antiquities; and much more.

The most diverse tones are struck; a soft, often fervent piety in the half-religious songs, and in the midst of them the roguish song about sacred Mecca; sharp scorn in the scolding songs and excellent humor in the self-rallying of the poor peasant-lad. Pleasures of the feast; the pilgrimage to Mecca; prison and death are made subjects of song. Even in the sphere of love-songs, which, in modern Egypto-Arabic poetry are usually rather monotonous, there is great variety of treatment shown. To be sure, there are not lacking, the sentimental and often tearful descriptions of love-sickness, which, in the Egyptian mind, are inseparable from the lover; nevertheless

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it is just in the love-songs that we find a certain freshness and vividness. If the character as a whole were not to be misrepresented, then we could not omit from the collection, those songs which, for our feeling, are rather too strongly natural in expression.[1] Prudishness seemed to me, in this case, to deserve little consideration. I have, however, been obliged to withhold about a dozen of them.

The songs all have their melodies, although they are not always pleasing to our ear, because of their limitation to a few tones, and of being sung in a peculiar, nasal voice; nevertheless, the Egyptians pride themselves on their singing, and consider themselves a very musical people.[2] Even if I had heard all the songs sung, it would have been of very little use to me, for, being quite unmusical, I would not have been able either to write them down or to confide them to memory. I must leave it to others to remedy this; it would certainly be worth while. When the boys sang at the work of excavating, as they were usually inclined to do, they

[1]) According to Maḥmûds testimony, the most outspoken of these are sung by old women, who are paid to entertain the guests at family celebrations. In a village there are three or four such women.

[2]) That this claim is recognized outside of their own land, as justifiable, Wetzstein shows, in his remark, that in Damascus, Egyptians are chosen by preference, for street-criers (especially as musebbil) on account of their artistic singing. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft, XI p. 513.)

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461 kept strict time, accenting the beats, which, just as
533 in ancient times, were, besides, often marked by clapping the hands and stamping the feet. The songs of the boys, who, 4500 years ago were occupied in building our temple of the sun, will not have sounded very differently.

114 Although I collected the songs at Sa"āra (Saq-
171 qāra), it is, of course, not to be inferred, that they
121 all originated there, or that they are not sung elsewhere. In some cases it could be determined, that knowledge of them extended to Cairo and even to the sea between Egypt and Palestine. It is worthy of note, that several songs which others endeavored to contribute, were refused by Maḥmûd with the words: "No, those are not peasant songs." It will be very interesting to determine the geographical range of the songs, when once collections of songs from other places have been published, with exact indications of their provenience.[1] As they are songs in the Arabic language, there will be evident similarities with Arabic songs from countries outside of Egypt, in spite of their being quite distinct in general character from the non-Egyptian songs with which
114 I am acquainted. The only time which I had at my disposal for writing down the songs, were the few free hours which the work of excavation, with

[1]) F. Kern informs me, that some of the songs, with variations, are contained in the collection: Qaṭâif el-laṭâif, printed in Cairo. In the detailed treatment which he is preparing, he will follow the occurrence of our songs in vulgar Arabic texts both printed and manuscript.

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85.

In Love.

×539 One day, à propos of this song, it occurred to a wag amongst our men, to improvise verses, and these improvisations were sung throughout that entire afternoon and, indeed, [186] to the Egyptian national hymn. This hymn is a very curious, [533] musical production, which, I am told, was composed after the oriental style, by a European.

Ṭāliʿa min bēt abūha
rēḥe ḥōš eg-gimal,
ʿēnha-l-ḥabībha teraʾi
wil-maḥrame fīdha-š-šimāl.

As she comes out of her father's house
And goes toward the camel-yard,
Her eye looks after her beloved,
And her handkerchief is in her left hand.

[293] 2. The place enclosed by a cactus-hedge or otherwise, in which the camels pasture. It lies outside the village proper.

4. The women are fond of coquetting with little em- [832] broidered handkerchiefs. Compare a song in Dalman, p. 25 [293] (from Jerusalem), which begins thus: "I see Mish'al sitting [531] by the mill, in Mish'al's hand an embroidered handkerchief."

8: Schaefer

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[For information on Fellahin songs, see category 116, pp. 1-148.]

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a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the latter being less in use among the women than among the men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them (since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocritical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

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Thus strengthened it is possible for the Moslim in his nocturnal devotions to perform the twenty systems of reverential bendings (*rák'a*) now demanded instead of the usual three. On the streets there is not to be sure a surging of people up and down, and there are also but a few of the dealers or artisans' shops opened, but a bustle and traffic at other times unusual on the street at night may still be noticed; numerous sellers of fruits, and especially of confectionery, have lighted up their stations, and, till far into the night, cry their wares, now so largely patronised by young and old; the cafés are all well attended, and if one pleases he can now get here besides the black bitter coffee sweetened coffee or a cup of ginger water with sugar, and sometimes also sherbet of rose-water, tamarinds, raisins, St. John's bread, or, lastly, a drop of liquorice juice. A "poet" relates to the by-standers the deeds of the hero Abuset or Antar, sometimes bursting out into song, and accompanying himself by scraping on a one stringed fiddle. In another café a master of music twangs with all the rapidity of a virtuoso the innumerable treble strings of a kind of guitar, and draws from it those weak jingling tones which recall to us our boyhood and the time when we received our first music lessons on the dingy-keyed piano of a country schoolmaster. There the guests listen to a story-teller; with voluble tongue and poetic verse he describes the enchanted princes and princesses, the excursions of the disguised Haroun al Rashid and his viziers, the man-eating monsters, the Jewish enchanters, which form the material for every one of those tales, the number of which is far more than 1001. The narrative is extempore —purely from memory.

In the houses matters proceed in the same way or even with more liveliness. Everybody who has a house to offer "prepares a couch" (*yfrish*) in order to receive guests, and treats them to coffee. On such evenings the merriest humour prevails, and at no time the whole year through does the Moslim appear in such a hearty vein as on the nights of Ramadan. He goes from one house to another and makes a round of calls upon his friends and acquaintances. In

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order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month. Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls, and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and also of feasting, for which the women during the following month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

In the three following days of the next month, Shaual, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is celebrated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their customers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that the fast has now come to an end. After supper everybody goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

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immense. The town contains twice or thrice as many strangers as inhabitants, and these are all on foot. Camels behung with coloured cloths, ribbons, carpets, and bells, carry the *mahmel* or "ark" of the tutelary saint, which is covered with the grave-cloth embroidered in gold and silver; the main part of this mahmel, a quadrangular wooden frame with a pyramidal top, may be seen at other times on the roof of the sheikh's building. The anniversary of other saints is also occasionally celebrated at the same time, and each has his mahmel. These processions have an unmistakable similarity to those that took place at the clothing of the statues of the ancient Egyptian deities. When the camels are collected the procession starts. The advanced guard is formed by a large number of swift camels, whose riders, sitting upon rich housings, and themselves decked with gay garments, gallop backwards and forwards and display their dexterity. Others show their horses' action, while boys strive to get their donkeys to gallop. Pipers and kettle-drummers head the procession itself. (it is only the military that have drums and trumpets proper), then comes the chorus of day and night watchmen, followed by the Turkish soldiers and police-officials in full regimentals. This armed body keeps up a perpetual fire, loading their old-fashioned guns and pistols to the muzzle. In their midst rides the governor of the province or his representative on a richly caparisoned steed, the procession being joined also, when possible, by a squadron of Bashi Bazouks or irregular troops, and a company of regular troops of the line. The camels with the mahmels, each led by a man, form the middle of the festal procession. Under the frames of the mahmels peep out boys and girls who have been elevated to this blessed seat, either in virtue of their rank, or by the recommendations of their fathers. Before every camel a body of men dance and sing pious odes, hymns and verses of the Koran; gay flags consecrated to the sheikh are carried alongside of the camel. Behind follow more musicians, and after them dancing-girls, who are indispensable even to such pious solemnities, and are believed not to have a disturbing effect upon the devotion appropriate to

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527 524 779 303 trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 533 535 Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own special name of *bâlo*. In the court, or the space in front of the house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candelabra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivities. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot, high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number 354 527 535 792 301 of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots; but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-girls 304 smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground; 533 534 527 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

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bourines with jingling metal plates attached. Or a genuine young singing-girl (an *almeh*) has been sent for, often also a singing-boy. With elevated necks they rise up to the highest regions of the tenor, always despising, however, the feminine region of the falsetto voice; anon they let their voices sink deeper and deeper with the most delicate swells and modulations, but seldom venture down into the bass voice. All sing together in the same key; harmony is unknown, monologues and recitative choruses being generally sung. Rapid shading is strictly avoided, and, accordingly, the Arab derives no pleasure from European music, regarding it as disagreeable and ridiculous, or at best remains indifferent to it, as something foreign. From time to time modulations occur which suspend the expected close. The sound now dies away like the stroke of a bell trembling through the stormy air. A sudden outburst of ecstasy begins a new period, the most delightful sounds of which are uttered through the nose. Allah! Allah! shout the people in rapturous enthusiasm, and the singing-girls, encouraged by the applause, sing still more delightfully, the kettle-drums and other instruments become louder and stormier.

Dancing-girl.

At such moments rise the dancing-girls, the celebrated *bayaderes* of Egypt, commonly called *ghawâzi* (not *almeh*, which means a singing-girl). Only a few of these form an artistic conception of their parts, and represent in pantomime the common history of a love affair—pursuit, coyness at first, victory, and lastly, entire self-abandonment. Their much-admired dances are, however, generally quite inartistic, having no regular figures, no keeping of time, no combined movements. In dancing the girl skips backwards and forwards before the spectators, raises the arms, clatters

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535 the inevitable castanets (like the crotali of the ancients),
527 and casts around coquettish glances. Whatever of art is
[534] displayed consists in movements of the trunk and hips—impossible to imitate—the limbs being almost at rest. Occasionally the girl moves slowly round in a circle, gives a slight hop, perhaps swings a sword, and sinks gradually to the ground balancing a small cup on her forehead, or whirls herself round sitting on a narrow-mouthed pitcher. Yet the public are enthusiastic to the highest degree about those female performers, a popularity which no doubt they owe more to their affability than to their artistic skill, since they joke with everybody and everybody with them without any embarrassment. But dancing is given up entirely to them, and if any one were to catch them round the waist, *ala Franka*, and dance round in a galop with them, he would bring abuse and disgrace on himself, and would be set down as crazy. It is a modern and Frankish custom for members of both sexes to dance together in close contact, and such a practice was also unknown to classical antiquity. The Oriental loves dancing and music, but seldom cultivates them in person, getting people who practise these arts as their profession to perform for his entertainment; and their profession is never held in esteem, but is regarded as degrading, like that of an actor in the Frankish middle ages. For
● 533 a grown-up man of the better class to sing by himself, or
[558] merely to join in with others, or even to amuse himself on a musical instrument, is regarded as undignified, and still more for ladies. At such *fantasies* the representatives of religion,
527 the kadis and ulema, do not fail to be present, and laugh
793 heartily even at obscenities. The priests of ancient Egypt, as also the severe Socrates, saw no harm in having music and dancing in their houses; they even practised music themselves. The higher ranks did not dance and sing themselves,
[171] but hired professional dancing-girls and musical performers as at the present day. Among the Greeks music and dancing were in high esteem, and formed a part of education—even the gods themselves danced.

535 The performance of the *chauel* or male dancer is not much
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of an improvement on that of the female dancer. Clothed and tricked out like a dancing-girl, he goes through the same kind of motions on another evening to the delight of the spectators. Sometimes he also plays on some instrument, and sings as well; he blows his bagpipes full of wind, and while it escapes melodiously from the holes of the tubes under the play of his fingers he strikes up his ear-piercing song, which is followed by the hip-dance—a threefold artistic effect produced all at once. This class of hermaphrodites, the product of the luxurious East, also resemble the dancing-girls in their abandoned morals.

RELIGIOUS ENTERTAINMENTS.

In this round of festivities entertainments of a religious kind must not be absent, and they are commonly, on these and other occasions, the only ones that are held. They are not called *fantasies;* it is considered very far wrong in any one to call them so. The *chatmeh* or public reading of the whole Koran at one spell begins at vespers. From that until night, and from night-prayers to next morning, the whole of the Koran is gabbled over by school-masters, corpse-washers, and other similar functionaries who can read. The readers of the Koran speak and sing in the paternoster style, in a tone as if cajoling themselves and God, and breathlessly hurrying to the end; the words, nevertheless, have an imposing effect through the emphatic and melodious expression in which they are clothed, and the greater the more mystical they are. The guests, illumined by the blessing arising from the sound of the divine words, converse about all kinds of worldly matters. Indeed they do not generally understand the meaning of the words any more than the readers, and perhaps often the author himself. They do not wish to understand, since the truth of the Koran is raised above all doubts, and to reflect on its meaning, and especially to criticise it, like the *feilosufi*, were worthy of hell fire. The Koran contains mingled together dreamy unintelligible passages, platitudes, repetitions, contradictions, unexpected digressions,

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little attention, since the person possessed or "disguised" (*melbûs*) will recover of himself, or if it lasts too long, somebody shouts into his ear the Mohammedan confession of faith. As soon as he can repeat it in his turn the evil spirit leaves him, and he is again an ordinary man as before.

ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE WOMEN.

While during the weeks before a circumcision or a marriage the men are thus spending the nights in pleasures and amusements, the women also get up *fantasieh* in their own manner among themselves. They meet together every day (seldom by night) in the house where the entertainments are given, where they sing, beat the darabuka or hand-drum and the tambourine, and dance too, it may be, like the professional dancing-girls, rattling their castanets. This for the most part, however, is only done by women of the lower ranks, those of the higher listen and look on. Men must not be spectators, not even the master of the house. The professional singers (*almeh*), more virtuous than the dancing-girls, generally exhibit their powers only in the harem, and the men listen to their charming songs through the latticed windows of the women's apartments.

On the occasion of festivities among people of lower rank, especially country people, a man, on the other hand, may witness a public dance of women, veils, however, being worn. The scene is the court-yard or other open space. Late at night, after the evening prayer, the male spectators who choose to come seat themselves in a circle or semicircle, a fire being kept burning near by in order to heat coffee, to furnish lights for pipes, and occasionally to dry the kettle-drums rendered damp by the night-dew. On one side of the circle stand, thronging closely together, the ballad singers or improvvisatori, who at the command of a leader repeat for hours on end a verse manufactured by himself, always in the same melody, for instance:—

"She (the loved one) has made me a cap
Handsome as the castle of Mohammed Ali."

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527 They also clap their hands, beat the kettle-drums, make
●[533] gestures and movements of all kinds, wag their heads about,
jump, stoop down, but do not move from the spot. At the
535 same time female forms, completely veiled and enveloped in
an outer robe, enter the circle and dance, but in their dancing
also there is no violent galloping about, nor even hopping,
but they move with varying paces, run sideways, backwards
and forwards, wriggle, bend, and turn round slowly. The
pantomimic motions are made with their hands, their faces
not being available for the purpose. The row of singers
[533] appears especially to take pleasure in the movements of the
dancers, catching up all their bendings and gestures, and
repeating them. One woman steps into the circle while
another vanishes, or several dance together at the same time,
but never in harmony with each other. A spectator now
passes through the circle, hurries up to one of the dancers,
who has particularly pleased him, and twines a handkerchief
round her, in which he has knotted several coins. The more
actively and coquettishly the veiled damsel dances, the more
admirers she gains, and she may leave the scene hung with
handkerchiefs. After some time the unfolded and emptied
handkerchief is unexpectedly flung to its owner by the lady,
who again appears on the scene, and who has been able to
find out, even in the darkness of night, who it was that
decorated her and made her the present.

On this occasion a dance which has a half warlike character is also executed specially for the men. The dancer is armed with a sword or a long cudgel, which, hopping and springing, bending and wheeling, he swings as gracefully as possible, with pantomimic and gently threatening movements towards the spectators. Or perhaps two dancers enter the circle, and with similar movements engage in mock combat.

CIRCUMCISION.

527 On the evening before the great day of Circumcision, the
304 "night of the henna," the women assemble. The henna
824 leaves are kneaded into a dough or paste, which is set in

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585 Under the red glow of crackling pitch torches, amid the unme-
372 lodious noise of copper hand-drums, the joyful toot of a double
534 reed-pipe, and the hymns chanted by the schoolmasters and
533 other pillars of the faith, followed by half the inhabitants of the town, the bridegroom walks from night prayer in the mosque to his own dwelling. Here the procession halts. The singers form a ring and sing around the hero of the wedding, for whom the marriage torches form an illumination. A transparent vernal down is springing on his full smooth cheeks, his stature gives hope that he will grow for some years still, his voice as it is heard now and then sounds childishly delicate, or struggles painfully with the voice of manhood. The
290 immature form of the youth is clothed in a coat of scarlet cloth, for the first time the manly turban rises on his head, and by his side hangs the marriage sword. Solemnly, seriously, and slowly he paces onwards in the midst of a few of his companions. The procession halts before this or that house, and the chief personages and musicians are regaled with sweetened coffee and sherbet, musket shots sound in the stillness of night, till at last his father's house is reached. Hither the bride has already come in another direction from the
292 house of her parents, from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot enveloped in a Cashmere shawl, which, like the red coat of the bridegroom, is generally borrowed for this day only. She is embraced, and almost carried by two wives, and followed by a crowd of women and girls uttering cries of joy. The house of feasting is lighted up outside with gay lamps and lanterns, and here the people amuse themselves with the dancing-girls, singers, and buffoons, or, if more seriously disposed, listen to the mysterious words of the Koran, or tire themselves out in zikrs, while the bridegroom mounts to the chambers of the women, and lifts the veil of her who has been chosen for him, and whom he has never yet seen, unless, tormented by impatience, he has already, on the occasion of the procession from the mosque, gone through this momentous proceeding in the house of the bride. There she stands before
302 him, the little, tender, lovely maiden, her eyes deeply black-
301 ened with kohl, her hands coloured red, her face dotted over

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764 coffin, would be crushed by the clods of earth heaped over it. This excavation serves only as the entrance to a roomy earthen vault, hollowed out alongside of it, in which the body is placed, and is thus protected as well as if in a coffin. The entrance to the lateral vault is then built up with bricks, and during this lengthy operation the people standing around
[533] sing the melodious song "God pardon the Mohammedan men and Mohammedan women, the believing men and believing women" (*allahu mughfir el moslimin u el moslimat u el mumenin u el mumenat*). One of the scribes, an imam, a
775 schoolmaster, or the corpse-washer, delivers himself of a short
764 stereotyped funeral discourse, in which the deceased—who is no doubt straining his ears to listen—is instructed as to what he is to answer at the examination he will have to undergo in the coming night. Once more the confession of the Mohammedan faith is impressed upon him. For there come to
[776] test him two angels of horrid aspect, Nakir and Munkir by name, and torment him soul and body if he does not stand on the firm basis of Islam. Lastly, those present whisper
764 the *fatha*, and amid loud invocations to the gracious and all-merciful One, clod after clod is flung by them into the grave. The male members of the family who act as mourners place themselves in a row, receive the consolatory words and hand-shaking of the people who have come along with them, and every one hastens to the place whence he has come.

765 In the night we hear behind the walls of the house of mourning the shrieking of women, now wound off in the trochees of a machine in action, anon in the dactyls of the steam-horse thundering along at full speed, or breaking up into the indefinite clack of a mill. Briskly is the kettle-drum beaten, and high up, from time to time, like a rocket, rises a shriek from a hundred throats. The earth gives out a hollow sound from the stamping of the feet of the filth-besmeared women. It sounds like an ungovernable outburst
[535] of joy and revelry; it is the corpse dance, through which the
[154] wife gives vent to her stormy grief.

The men, however, pass the "night of loneliness" with their friends and neighbours before the house or in a neigh-

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bouring court-yard, drinking coffee and enveloped in clouds of tobacco-smoke. At the entrance or exit of a sympathizing neighbour, though he has merely come to sip a small cupful of coffee, the mourners rise and are addressed with such customary phrases of consolation as, "Such is life; but you are still alive yourself." General and individual conversations go on, in which some of the mourners take an active part, while others, bathed in tears, sit dumb in a corner. In an adjoining room lean schoolmasters occupy themselves with chanting the "book that cannot be doubted," or murmur a three-thousand-fold "Allah," in order to induce God to pity the poor soul of him who has gone to his rest. This mourning reception with coffee lasts for three days if the deceased was grown up, and the near relatives and friends remain together even during the night and take a common meal.

On the following days we hear in the house of mourning such a sorrowful, slow, monotonous song of lamentation, uttered in a low tone by a company of women, and mingled with weeping and sobbing, that it thrills painfully through bone and marrow. Thus for years does a mother or wife bewail one whom she has loved and lost, on certain days of the week, or on certain days of the year consecrated to the memory of the dead, collecting her female friends, relatives, and neighbours, and especially practised mourning women, in order to relieve her sorrowful heart, and to have the virtues of the deceased duly sung; while the men gather round them a company of their friends and cause the Koran to be read in memory of their lost ones. Among the ancient Egyptians similar mourning hymns were sung during the period of seventy days that the body was being embalmed. The great festivals also do not pass without visits being made to the graves of dear ones, as we have seen above.

Thus does Islam honour its dead.

[pp. 204–408 not Processed]